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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Mighty God, You shine in glorious brilliance. The world belongs to You and everything in it. Teach us to trust You in turbulent times, striving always to live for Your glory.

Bless our Senators. Make Your completeness surround their incompleteness. Your strength support their weakness, and Your wisdom guide them down paths they cannot see. Give them the insight, the courage, and the faith to escape the repetition of old errors as they seek to embrace Your truth.

Lord, help us all to offer to You the sacrifice of repentant hearts.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

TRANSPORTATION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last week, the Republican-led Senate passed two more appropriations bills by a large bipartisan majority. Both bills passed out of committee with

unanimous support, were subject to hours of debate and deliberation, and included the input of both Democratic and Republican Senators.

The first appropriations measure, for transportation and housing infrastructure, will help ensure air travel is safer and more efficient, invest in important infrastructure, and strengthen America's surface transportation network.

As Senator COLLINS pointed out last week, this bill includes "recommendations from more than 75 Senators from both sides of the aisle" as well as more than three dozen amendments. I thank my friend from Maine for her skilled leadership and hard work with Ranking Member REED of Rhode Island and colleagues from both sides to advance this measure.

The second funding measure, for veterans and military construction, will ensure that veterans receive benefits and health care they have earned while enhancing oversight and accountability at the VA, helping improve quality of life on military bases for soldiers and their families, and advancing critical national security projects like missile defense. As Senator KIRK noted last week, this bill incorporates over two dozen amendments, both from Democrats and Republicans. Senator KIRK is a true champion for veterans. I know he always had the needs of our heroes top of mind as he worked with Democrats, with Republicans, and in particular with Ranking Member TESTER of Montana to move this critical bill forward.

By returning to regular order and working through the appropriations process, we have been able to pass appropriations measures like these that support national priorities in a responsible way.

I also appreciate Senators working toward a compromise approach for Zika. Preventing the spread of Zika is a priority for all of us, and I am pleased the Senate has approved a compromise provision to focus resources on

this important health issue. We have now begun discussions on how best to resolve the differences between the House and the Senate and get a bill to the President.

LEGISLATION COMBATING SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND HELPING ITS VICTIMS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on an important issue the Senate will address today, the Republican-led Senate believes in the importance of combating sexual assault and providing key protections for the victims of these heinous crimes. In less than 18 months, we have already passed many different measures to help victims and to help stop these crimes. We passed the Amy and Vicky act, which will help the victims of child pornography to get restitution from those who profit from their pain. And because we know the pain doesn't end when these images are produced, it can help victims find the closure they need and deserve too.

We passed an important measure championed by Senator TOOMEY, who worked with Senator ALEXANDER to include in the K-12 education reform bill a requirement that States put laws and policies in place to help ensure schools are no longer able to ship child predators to other school districts.

We passed a measure from Senator PORTMAN, who worked with Senator MCCASKILL to hold an infamous child sex-trafficking company in contempt and force it to turn over critical information—information that is needed for their bipartisan human trafficking investigation to continue.

And, of course, we passed the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. The victims of modern slavery deserve justice, and they deserve a voice, which is why—after years of previous inaction—the new Republican-led Senate made it a priority to pass this important anti-slavery bill. Of course, it is now law.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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